

# How Socio-economic Factors, Relationships, Daily Life, and Future Orientation Affect Happiness for College Students

Jeaah Jung<sup>1</sup>, Song Yi Lee<sup>1\*</sup>, Tae Eun Shim<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dharma College, Dongguk University

<sup>2</sup>Competency Development Center, Dongguk University

## 대학생의 행복에 영향을 미치는 사회경제적 요인, 관계, 일상생활, 미래지향성에 관한 연구

정지아<sup>1</sup>, 이송이<sup>1\*</sup>, 심태은<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>동국대학교 다르마칼리지, <sup>2</sup>동국대학교 학생처 역량개발센터

**Abstract** This research aims to gain a better understanding of college students' thoughts on what factors make them happy and contribute to enhancing their happiness. We focused on the relationship between their self-assessed happiness and various factors affecting happiness, such as their socio-economic status, relationships with others, future orientation, and daily activities. Survey data were collected from October, 2014 to December, 2014 at a South Korean University. The final total number of respondents was 474 from 500 distributed questionnaires, after excluding 26 responses with missing values and unanswered items. The response was comprised of 247 male students, and 227 female students, and of 268 freshmen, 145 sophomores, 35 juniors, and 26 senior students. Factors that were statistically significant were gender, year, average cost of leisure, appearance satisfaction, conversation hour with parents, having girlfriend/boyfriend, sexual experience, number of friends, satisfaction with major, Grade Point Average (GPA), studying hours, time for self-improvement, reading hours, use of smart phone hours, number of daily meals, exercise hour, schedule management and future goal setting. This research was conducted utilizing only data from one university and so it may not be appropriate to generalize the results. Moreover, some of the variables are not in line with previous studies on happiness. Some other mediating variables may exist. Therefore, following research should be conducted.

**요약** 본 연구에서는 대학생들에게 어떤 요인들이 행복에 차이를 주는가를 살펴보기 위하여 사회경제적 측면, 대학생이 맺는 다양한 인간관계, 일상생활, 미래지향성 등의 다양한 영역에 관련된 요인을 구성하여 살펴보고 이를 기반으로 한국 대학 생의 행복감을 높이는 데 기여하고자 하였다.

본 연구의 목적을 달성하기 위하여 서울시에 위치한 D대학 대학생 474명을 대상으로 분석한 결과, 연구 대상의 일반적인 특성은 성별의 경우 남학생 247명(52.1%), 여학생 227명(47.9%)으로 구성되었다. 학년은 1학년 268명(56.5%), 2학년 145명(30.6%), 3학년 35명(7.4%), 4학년 26명(5.5%)으로 나타나, 저학년이 많은 것으로 조사되었다.

연구결과, 행복과 의미 있는 관계를 보여주는 변인은 성, 학년, 레저비용, 외모만족도, 부모와의 대화시간, 이성친구 유무, 성경험, 친구 수, 전공 만족도, 학점, 공부시간, 자기계발 시간, 독서시간, 스마트폰 사용, 점심횟수, 운동, 스케줄 관리, 목표설정 등이었다. 반면에 거주형태, 한달 평균용돈, 통학시간, 동거경험, 노트북 사용 시간, SNS 사용시간, 전화통화 시간, 컴퓨터 게임시간, TV 시청시간, 점심 지출금액, 커피횟수, 술 마시는 횟수, 유흥비 등은 행복과 관련이 없는 것으로 나타났다. 또한 미래지향성은 행복의 차이에 영향을 미쳤다.

한국은 경제적 수준에 비해 대학생이 느끼는 행복감이 낮은 나라이다. 인간의 궁극적인 목적을 행복이라고 생각할 때 이 목적을 달성하기 위하여 변화의 가능성이 높은 대학생 시기에 행복에 영향을 미치는 적절한 변인들을 찾아 이를 향상시킬 수 있도록 노력하는 사회에 본 연구가 기여하기를 기대한다.

**Keywords :** College students, Daily life, Future Orientation, Happiness, Relationship, Socio-economic

\*Corresponding Author : Song Yi Lee (Dongguk Univ.)

Tel: +82-2-2290-1638 email: songyilee@empas.com

Received March 20, 2017

Revised April 18, 2017

Accepted June 9, 2017

Published June 30, 2017

## 1. Introduction

Research on what determines people's happiness has a long history of studies in various academic areas. Here we argue that researchers mostly focus on examining adults who are physically and mentally mature, and whose roots of happiness trace back to positive and sometimes negative experiences from their childhood.[1] Adolescents who are in their transition period to adulthood are a unique population in that they have the cognitive maturity and ability to understand the emotional complexities involved in their everyday lives compared to children. However, they also differentiate from the adult population in areas including job satisfaction and spousal satisfaction.[2, 3, 4] Adolescents, especially those who are college students, are experiencing both positive and negative daily events from school assignments, job search related stress, romantic relationships, and day to day activities. In 2015, 28 percent of adolescents in Korea responded that they seriously contemplated suicide.[5] This research is aimed to have a better understanding of college students' thoughts on what may make them happy, and to contribute to helping them enhance their well-being. More specifically, we looked into the differences between college students' self-assessed happiness and various elements such as socio-economic factors, relationships, daily life, and future orientation.

### 1.1 Concept of happiness

Happiness is the ultimate goal for everyone in their lives, leading them to continually search for factors of happiness. However, how people define happiness differs even though they may be under similar circumstances. Myers & Diener showed that factors such as personal characteristics, relationship, career experience, culture, and devotion were more significant than year, gender, race, and wealth for affecting one's happiness[6].

Kim found that family relationship, economic situation, employment condition, band of community,

friends, health and individual's belief and value were factors of happiness[7]. Jung showed that income, generation, family, career, and education were important factors for happiness[8].

Therefore, even though there has been many studies, it is difficult to narrow it down to a single definition. However, happiness can be broadly divided into two domains, the hedonic perspective and the eudaimonic perspective. Hedonic perspective focuses on material prosperity for happiness, whereas the latter takes a psychological approach, emphasizing personal fulfilment and potential realization[9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14].

Early stages of research on happiness were centered on the hedonic perspective.[15] Therefore, it was understood that happiness is influenced by socio-economic factors regardless of the individual's psychological condition[16]. So, the overall evaluation of one's quality of life was dependent on objectively measurable factors, such as age, gender, employment status, income, education, and health[17].

However, UNSDSN[18] (United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network) reported that Korea's self-assessed happiness, as of 2016, ranked only 58th among a total of 156 countries, which is actually lower than some economically less affluent countries. This clearly shows that economic rank does not fully explicate happiness. Also, according to studies by Diener and Lucas[19] as well Haneta[16], socio-economic factors only account for a small portion of variables, as little as 2 percent to 15 percent, and would not reflect cultural uniqueness or individual needs. Therefore, solely relying on socio-economic variables has very limited explanatory power to unravel the components of happiness.

Today, subjective evaluation of satisfaction on overall life that an individual recognizes throughout his or her life, such as relationships, social activities, and achievement in their career, is also taken into consideration along with material prosperity[20].

Some studies on psychological theories on happiness suggest six states of well-being a person pursues in

life, which are self-acceptance, continued growth and development, seeing one's life as meaningful, positive relations with other people, ability to manage one's life and the world, and autonomy[21].

## 1.2 The predictors of happiness

### 1.2.1 Socio-economic indicators

Many scholar papers seek differences between happiness and socio-economic indicators. According to Lyubomirsk a person's happiness level is governed by three factors:[22] individual standards, circumstances in life, and activities. Circumstances that determine happiness are external environment, such as age, gender, educational attainment level, income, and family, which only accounts for 10 percent of an individual's happiness. This implies that the remaining 90 percent of factors that explain happiness lies in a person's willpower and effort[23, 24]. Holder and Coleman assert that young adults and children who subjectively assess themselves in a positive way for areas such as their drive, family environment, gender, and grades, have a higher happiness level[4].

Furthermore, Keith argues that income level only accounts for two percent of a person's subjective happiness[25]. This may be because a person makes cognitive decision based on subjective evaluation of his or her wealth, not on the actual numerical value of the wealth he/she possesses[26]. However, Larson saw that the more comfortable a person feels towards their residential environment, the happier they were. Moreover, a person who earns high income tends to feel happier than a person with less income[27].

International organizations (ex. UNICEF) or national-level organizations (ex. The US Child Well-being Index (CWI), The UK Public Service Agreement Target (PSA), and The State of London's Children (SOLC)) suggest that determining factors for happiness are economic well-being, social relations, educational achievement, family, leisure, culture, accommodation, extra-curricular activities, and personal activities. This is well summarized in Park

children-adolescent happiness index table[28].

One factor that needs contemplation when studying happiness is physical appearance. Satisfaction with physical appearance gained great scholarly attention from economists. They examined how happiness and their self-assessed appearance correlated. Economists found that appearance affected wage, marriage, and bargaining power within the labor market in an indirect way [20]. Therefore, there has been an increasing number of psychologists studying how subjective assessment of appearance affects a person's evaluation of happiness.

### 1.2.2 Relationships

As examined previously, Ryff's summary on psychological well-being counted positive relationships with other people as one of the factors that lead to happiness[30]. Moreover, Yu et al's exploration on happiness points out that college students in Korea may see happiness differently from Western students[31]. They argue that happiness in the Western context is focused on positive evaluation of the self, while Korea defines happiness through relationships. More qualitative studies on happiness show that a person seeks a sense of well-being and happiness from factors, such as parents, family, friends, and children. So, a person tends to be much more psychologically stable and mentally positive when they have strong support and resources. This would then allow the person to subjectively assess himself/herself as being happy[32, 33].

### 1.2.3 Daily life

There are diverse factors that can affect adolescents' happiness level. Researchers thus far have discovered that children and adolescents, who have had plenty of positive experiences during their growth period, have developed the resilience to maintain happy during their adulthood[34, 35, 36]. Such positive experiences can include an economically affluent environment as well as good relationships with their family and friends.

Daily life context can be divided into two domains. One involves activities, such as academic activities, leisure activities, and daily activities. The other includes being alone, being with family, being with friends, being with teachers, being with relatives, being with neighbors, and being with strangers[37, 38]. Lee, Shin et al found that to understand college student's happiness level in their daily lives, we must look at psychological factors, such as personal relationships and family, relationships with the opposite sex, satisfaction with major, self-management, self-goals and achievement, state of mind, emotional stability, hobbies, self-expression, and positive attitude, along with economic factors and social environment factors. This study focused on daily activities for examining the student's happiness in terms of daily life.

#### 1.2.4 Future orientation

College students, who are in their late adolescent developmental stage reaching adulthood, begin to grow their interest and concerns towards future oriented issues, such as politics, social issues, idealism, and ethical issues, which are all based on social, historical, and cultural context[39]. Trommsdorff's study on adolescent future orientation can be divided into four categories[40], which are characteristics and self-realization, physical well-being and appearance, family, and job. Fricke and Poole also stated that adolescents' personal future orientation is focused on their job and marriage[41, 42].

Gradually, studies on future orientation began to expand from personal orientation, such as occupational prosperity and marital happiness, to a societal level, which can be divided into two parts. The first part involves environmental changes such as war, environmental pollution, and demographic change. The latter is focused on issues concerning values, including democracy, economic development, science technology, justice and freedom[43, 44].

As seen previously in the literature review on the concept of happiness, the ultimate meaning of living for

human beings, without a doubt, is happiness. However, factors that have an effect on what a person perceives as happiness differ by the nature of the study and the subjects being studied. Entering college is considered an achievement that leads one step towards a higher level in life for Korean students. However, the question still remains whether or not the students are in fact happy after they have achieved their goals. Therefore, our research aim is to discover which variables among socio-economic indicators, diverse relationships, daily lives, and future orientation, best explains Korean college students' self-assessed happiness.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1 Participants

College students (N=500) were given questionnaires on happiness between October of 2014 to December of 2014. The students were verbally informed of the purpose of the research and the questionnaires were done on a voluntary basis. They were all from a single university located in the city of Seoul.

Final sample size was 474 answers, excluding 26 answers that were unanswered or had poor responses. General characteristics of the sample were 227 female students (47.9%) and 247 male students (52.1%), and among them, 268 students were freshmen (56.5%), 145 students were sophomores (30.6%), 35 students were juniors (7.4%), and 26 students were seniors (5.5 %).

**Table 1.** General Characteristics of the Participants

Variables	Classification	N	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	247	52.1
	Female	227	47.9
Year	Freshman	268	56.5
	Sophomore	145	30.6
	Junior	35	7.4
	Senior	26	5.5
	Total	474	100

Independent variables related to happiness were broadly divided into four areas, which were socio-economic factors, relationships, daily activities,

and future orientations. The dependent variable is the six-scale answers from OHQ(Oxford Happiness Questionnaire), which is comprised of self-evaluated satisfaction of the self, relationship with others, positive outlook of the future, positive attitudes, and self-esteem.

## 2.2 Instrument

### 2.2.1 Questionnaire on happiness

This study utilized Hills and Argyle's OHQ (Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, OHQ hereafter)[45], which had already been tested by Choi and Lee for reliability and validity as well as adapted to fit into the Korean context[46]. OHQ is a subjective -assessment type questionnaire, which consists of 29 questions that are evaluated using the Likert scale. Operational definition of happiness in this questionnaire includes frequency of positive feelings, high level of life satisfaction, and absence of negative feelings[47]. Internal consistency was .90 and overall reliability of the happiness questionnaire was .88[46].

### 2.2.2 Personal Variables

Personal variables affecting happiness were constructed based on the psychological well-being scale by Ryff and Kim et al[30, 48] as well as from our observations on college students' lifestyle, which were socio-economic factors, relationships, and daily life.

Specific factors that measured subjective happiness of college students were gender, year, residence type, average allowance per month, average cost for lunch, average cost of entertainment per month, average cost of leisure per month, appearance satisfaction, conversation hour with their parents, having a girlfriend/boyfriend, sexual experience, cohabitation experience, number of friends, hours of social network service, hours of telephone conversation, satisfaction with major, GPA (Grade Point Average, GPA hereafter), commuting time, study hours per day, time for self-improvement, reading hours, use of smartphone per day, use of computer per day, use of computer

games per day, TV watching hours, number of meals per day, exercise hours, number of coffee drinking per day, alcohol consumption per week, schedule management, and future goal setting.

### 2.2.3 Future orientation

The measurement tool used for future orientation was 15 positive - outlook - on - future questions that Kim[49] modified using Jew et al's[50] 'Resilience Belief System' that was initially suggested by Mrazek and Mrazek's first version of 12 resilience factor study[51]. Overall reliability was .911, which was significant.

## 2.3 Analysis

To achieve our goals, our data was analysed using SPSS 23.0 program. The procedures of the analysis are as follows.

Frequency and percentage was calculated first, followed by reliability coefficient Cronbach's  $\alpha$  in order to examine the reliability of the measuring instrument.

Next, independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA test were used to test the differences in the personal variables.

Lastly, to test the differences in future orientation and happiness, independent t-test and one-way ANOVA test were conducted, followed by the Scheffe test.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Socio-economic factors and Happiness

The differences between Socio-economic factors and Happiness are listed in Table 2.

The results showed that male students were significantly happier than female students ( $t=8.02$ ,  $p<.01$ ), which signifies that gender among the total studied socio-economic factors affects happiness. Also, happiness level was higher as the year level went up ( $t=3.76$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and the higher the average cost of

leisure per month, the happier the students were ( $t=2.89$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

Furthermore, appearance satisfaction was found to significantly influence the students' happiness ( $t=17.79$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

**Table 2.** The Factors Affecting Happiness - Socio-economic factors

Predictors	Classification	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	F/p-value
Gender	Male	3.83	.55	8.02**
	Female	3.79	.47	
Year	Freshman	3.75	.49	3.76*
	Sophomore	3.85	.54	
	Junior	3.93	.56	
	Senior	4.04	.41	
Residence type	Living alone	3.74	.40	.36
	Living with others	3.80	.51	
	Living in dormitory	3.80	.55	
	Living in boarding house	3.83	.55	
	Living with family or relatives etc.	3.51	.97	
Average allowance per month (won)	200,000 or less	3.84	.53	1.16
	200,000 ~ 390,000 or less	3.73	.51	
	300,000 ~ 400,000 or less	3.84	.51	
	400,000 and over	3.82	.51	
Average cost for lunch (won)	2000 or less	3.68	.31	.94/.441
	2000~4000 or less	3.77	.52	
	4000~6000 or less	3.86	.51	
	6000~8000 or less	3.78	.51	
Average cost of entertainment per month (won)	8000 and over	3.86	.47	.37
	10,000 or less	3.80	.49	
	10,000 ~ 50,000 or less	3.78	.53	
	50,000 ~ 100,000 or less	3.85	.50	
	100,000 ~ 150,000 or less	3.80	.53	
Average cost of leisure per month (won)	150,000 and over	3.84	.52	2.89*
	10,000 or less	3.70	.50	
	10,000 ~ 50,000 or less	3.85	.52	
	50,000 ~ 100,000 or less	3.88	.47	
Appearance satisfaction	100,000 ~ 150,000 or less	3.87	.57	17.79***
	150,000 and over	4.00	.53	
	1	3.31	.95	
	2	3.17	.50	
	3	3.34	.47	
	4	3.35	.40	
	5	3.65	.46	
	6	3.77	.44	
	7	3.87	.42	
	8	4.04	.41	
	9	4.33	.47	
	10	4.16	.56	

\*\*\*  $p<.001$  \*\*  $p<.01$  \*  $p<.05$

### 3.2 The Factors Affecting Happiness - Relationships

The differences between socio-economic factors and happiness are listed in Table 3.

In terms of relationships, conversation hour with their parents ( $t=6.47$ ,  $p<.001$ ), having a girlfriend or a boyfriend ( $t=14.80$ ,  $p<.001$ ), number of friends ( $t=3.25$ ,  $p<.01$ ) as well as sexual experience strongly showed meaningful differences in happiness level ( $t=5.81$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Cohabitation experience, hours of social network service, and hours of telephone conversation were found to have had no significance.

**Table 3.** The Factors Affecting Happiness - Relationships

Predictors	Classification	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	F/p-value
Conversation hour with their parents (hour)	1 or less	3.68	.51	6.47***
	1~3 or less	3.77	.49	
	3~6 or less	3.88	.55	
	6~9 or less	4.00	.46	
Girlfriend/ Boyfriend	9 and over	4.07	.40	14.80***
	Have	3.93	.46	
Sexual experience	Not have	3.74	.53	5.81*
	Have	3.89	.52	
Cohabitation experience	Not have	3.77	.50	.00
	Have	3.81	.31	
Number of friends (people)	5 or less	3.61	.64	3.25**
	5~10 or less	3.75	.52	
	11~15 or less	3.83	.48	
	16~20 or less	3.84	.41	
	21~25 or less	3.96	.55	
Hours of Social Network Service	25 and over	3.98	.48	2.16
	30minutes or less	3.65	.61	
	30minutes ~1 or less	3.88	.52	
	1~2 or less	3.80	.49	
Hours of telephone conversation	2~3 or less	3.79	.42	2.08
	3 and over	3.86	.53	
	10minutes or less	3.73	.53	
	10minutes~30minutes or less	3.85	.50	
	30minutes~1 or less	3.83	.49	
	1~1and 30 or less	3.95	.49	
	Over 1 and 30	3.93	.55	

\*\*\*  $p<.001$  \*\*  $p<.01$  \*  $p<.05$

### 3.3 The Factors Affecting Happiness - Daily life

The differences between daily life and happiness are listed in Table 4.

In terms of daily life, satisfaction with their major was found to be significant in their happiness level ( $t=6.62$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The higher the GPA ( $t=5.33$ ,  $p<.001$ ), the longer the study hours ( $t=3.38$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and an average of 3 to 5 hours for self-improvement ( $t=4.41$ ,  $p<.01$ ) strongly influenced the students' happiness as well.

Also, there were meaningful differences found between the reading hours and students' happiness ( $t=2.69$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

The students with less smartphone use were happier than the students who used the smartphone more often ( $t=2.42$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and a higher number of meals per day ( $t=4.52$ ,  $p<.001$ ) as well as a higher number of exercise per day ( $t=3.59$ ,  $p<.01$ ) influenced the student's happiness.

Furthermore, schedule management ( $t=21.61$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and future goal setting ( $t=55.65$ ,  $p<.001$ ) were also found to have a significant influence on the students' happiness.

**Table 4.** The Factors Affecting Happiness - Daily life

Predictors	Classification	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	F/p-value
Satisfaction with major	1	3.57	.72	6.62***
	2	3.66	.36	
	3	3.56	.54	
	4	3.70	.46	
	5	3.61	.56	
	6	3.68	.45	
	7	3.82	.48	
	8	3.98	.46	
	9	4.01	.44	
	10	4.14	.52	
GPA (Grade Point Average)	2.49 or less	3.57	.38	5.33***
	2.5~2.99	3.77	.45	
	3.0~3.49	3.73	.52	
	3.5~3.99	3.88	.54	
	4.0~4.5	3.96	.49	
Commuting time (hour)	30minutes or less	3.82	.48	.61
	30minutes~1 or less	3.85	.49	
	1~1and 30 or less	3.79	.59	
	1and 30~2 or less	3.74	.49	
	2 and	3.60	.12	
Study hours per day (hour)	1or less	3.68	.55	8.32***
	1~3 or less	3.83	.45	
	3~5 or less	4.03	.49	
	5~7 or less	3.95	.47	
	7 or more	4.32	.39	

Time for self-improvement per day (hour)	1 or less	3.77	.49	4.41**
	1~3 or less	3.87	.53	
	3~5 or less	4.01	.61	
	5~7 or less	3.84	.36	
	7 or more	4.62	.34	
Reading hours per day	1 or less	3.79	.51	2.69*
	1~3 or less	3.93	.51	
	3~5 or less	3.53	.45	
	5~7 or less	4.25	.49	
Use of smartphone per day (hour)	1 or less	3.86	.59	2.42*
	1~2 or less	3.84	.49	
	2~3 or less	3.82	.46	
	3~4 or less	3.73	.48	
	4 and over	3.55	.59	
Use of computer per day(hour)	1 or less	3.85	.46	.62
	1~2 or less	3.76	.55	
	2~3 or less	3.81	.56	
	3~4 or less	3.83	.43	
	4 and over	3.82	.61	
Use of computer game(s)per day(hour)	0	3.82	.49	.44
	1 or less	3.80	.55	
	1~2 or less	3.81	.57	
	2~3 or less	3.66	.45	
	3 and over	3.80	.68	
TV watching hour(s)per day(hour)	30minutes or less	3.87	.51	2.30
	30minutes~1or less	3.80	.51	
	1~2 or less	3.71	.50	
	2~3 or less	3.70	.53	
	3 and over	4.00	.53	
Meal(s) per day (number)	1	3.47	.49	4.51**
	2	3.76	.52	
	3	3.88	.49	
	4	3.92	.52	
	4 and over	3.74	.87	
Exercise per day (hour)	30 minutes or less	3.74	.49	3.59**
	30minutes~1 or less	3.89	.53	
	1~1 and 30 or less	3.92	.55	
	1and 30~2 or less	4.02	.34	
	2 and over	4.17	.60	
Coffee drinking per day (number of cups)	0	3.76	.52	.98
	1	3.85	.45	
	2	3.81	.59	
	3	3.93	.59	
	4 and over	3.74	.87	
Alcohol consumption per week(number)	0	3.80	.50	.24
	1~3	3.82	.52	
	4~6	3.78	.52	
	7~9	4.01	.74	
	10 and over	3.74	.45	
Schedule management	Yes	3.93	.51	21.61***
	No	3.72	.50	
Future goal setting	Have	3.90	.49	55.65***
	Don't have	3.50	.46	

\*\*\*  $p<.001$  \*\*  $p<.01$  \*  $p<.05$

### 3.4 Future orientation and Happiness

The correlation between future orientation and the student's happiness ( $t=18.87$ ,  $p<.000$ ) is listed in Table

5. This result showed that the higher their future orientation, the happier they were, according to the regression model value ( $F=356.34$ ,  $p<.000$ ) and  $R^2=.43$

**Table 5.** The Difference and Future Orientation

Predictors	Dependent variable	S.E.	$\beta$	t	P-value
Future orientation	Constant	.11	-	14.92	.000
	Happiness	.02	.65	18.87	.000

\*\*\*  $p<.001$  \*\*  $p<.01$  \*  $p<.05$

#### 4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors affecting Korean college students in an effort to improve their happiness. According to the results, factors that were statistically significant were found to be gender, year, average cost of leisure, appearance satisfaction, conversation hour with parents, having girlfriend/boyfriend, sexual experience, number of friends, satisfaction with major, GPA (Grade Point Average), studying hours, time for self-improvement, reading hours, use of smart phone hours, number of daily meals, exercise hour, schedule management and future goal setting. However, residence type, average allowance, average cost of lunch, average cost of entertainment, cohabitation experience, hours of social network service, hours of telephone conversation, commuting time, use of computer, use of computer game, TV watching hour, the number of coffee drinking, the number of alcohol consumption did not show any meaningful differences in happiness for the college students.

The results of this study confirm earlier findings regarding differences in gender, where men were found to be happier than women [20, 52]. However, one Australian research reported that girls were happier than boys among children aged 4 to 6[53]. Therefore, these findings support the idea that happiness in relation to gender depends on the age and culture. In the case of Korea, because Korean culture still tends to

be a male - dominated society, male students may feel secure and be given priority compared to female students, which can explain the gender differences found.

Meaningful differences in happiness level due to age was also found, with happiness level rising as the year level went up, supporting the result that increasing age was associated with increasing self-reported happiness[54]. This finding was contrary to expectations, considering the fact that senior students are in a very competitive and demanding situation in Korean society with problems such as lack of jobs, which suggests that happiness level in college students can be influenced by not only age, but also other personal factors. According to one study, there are various factors of happiness depending on the age group. Academic achievement, trust, social support, and social efficiency were important factors for children and adolescents, while demographic sociological variables, activity participation, surrounding environment, personality and children's success influenced adults and seniors. However, in the case of early adulthood, including college students, all of these factors come into play [26]. Therefore, looking at this complex nature of how happiness is affected, further research is necessary to narrow down and find the specific age factors linked to college student's happiness.

In our study, the average money that college students spent was considered socio-economic factors, such as average allowance, average cost of entertainment and average cost of leisure. Among these factors, only the average cost of leisure showed meaningful differences in happiness. This finding supported a result from a Taiwanese study that extraversion significantly correlated with almost all kinds of leisure involvement for Chinese college students [55]. Leisure is significantly related to the college students' health. Therefore, we can conclude that the cost for leisure is more valuable than other cost the college students spend for their happiness.



Our finding regarding appearance satisfaction supports the result from a study by Shim[56], which suggests that students who have low self-esteem and high depression are likely to have higher levels of body dissatisfaction, and this, in turn, tends to be associated with greater abnormal eating behaviour. Furthermore, Baker and Bornstein[57] reported that global self-esteem, appearance satisfaction, and self-reported dieting are interrelated for early adolescence, which is in line with our findings. Therefore, we can suggest that appearance satisfaction for happiness is related to other significant factors like self-esteem. However, this is big problem for Korean students because such focus on one's appearance is leading students to spend a lot of time and money on cosmetic products and services, including plastic surgery. Thus, further research is necessary to find other factors rather than appearance satisfaction, to improve students' happiness.

Our study also suggests that personal relationships such as conversation hour with parents, having girlfriend/boyfriend, sexual experience, number of friends were significantly important factors, leading us to conclude similarly to a study by Kim [58] that college students in Korean culture appreciated the importance of family to feel happy. In addition, the more Korean students got emotional support from their family, the happier they were which also displays the importance of family for college students' happiness[59]. However, in another study in Canada, family relationship for Canadian college students was not a significant factor for their happiness[60]. Therefore, happiness level in family factors may depend on social and cultural traits from country to country, which leads to the conclusion that Korean culture places face to face relationships as one of their important values.

Cohabitation experience was found to be insignificant in making a difference to the happiness level. However, such experience is a great concern for college students. One study found that when college

students were asked if they would cohabitate if they had the chance, 85.3% of college students answered they would [61]. Therefore, our results may be inconsistent with the actual effects of cohabitation on student's happiness, due to taboo regarding cohabitation within the Korean culture. Our findings regarding hours of social network service and hours of telephone not having any significant differences in relation to happiness is in line with the studies by Arampatzi et al[62], which also found that the time spent on SNS had insignificant effect on happiness. Therefore, this leads us to suggest that traditional face to face relationship is more important than social networking relationship.

Our findings also showed significant differences in satisfaction with major and GPA. Regarding GPA, our study supported the findings of a study by Cheng and Furnham [63], which found a positive correlation between adolescent's happiness and their GPA. GPA is the proof of achievement students need to feel acknowledgement during their school life. In terms of school life, studying hours, time for self-improvement, reading hours and exercise were significant factors to show differences in happiness levels for Korean college students. These results suggest that Korean college students place a sense of achievement as their top priority, leading them to invest a lot into their school life.

The less time the students spent using their smartphones, the happier they were, supporting the study by Shim & Lee[64], which suggested that overuse of smartphones made college students feel uncomfortable. The number of meals showed significant differences in happiness level, confirming that the more meals they had, the higher their happiness level, inferring that college students were happy due to the time spent with others during their meals. On the other hand, there was no difference found affecting happiness in the average cost of lunch, further confirming that economic factor was not significant for the students' happiness.

Schedule management and future goal setting showed significant differences in terms of happiness level, confirming the findings by Lee[65] that setting goals for college students positively correlated with having optimistic characteristics leading to happiness. Our findings regarding future goal setting is in line with the results found by Laguna et al[66] that the relationship between goal realization and positive goal-related effect was stronger in more positively oriented individuals.

## 5. Limitations

This study has several limitations worth noting for further studies. Firstly, the participants of this study were only college students from one university in Seoul, lacking a diverse population of Korean college students. Therefore, a bigger pool from various schools across the country is necessary. In addition, South Korea is becoming a racially diverse society and currently has many students from abroad attending Korean universities. Therefore, a comparative study is necessary to take this diversity factor into consideration.

Secondly, the objective of our study was to look at factors related to the students' actual socioeconomic status, daily lifestyle and relationships, and we have found significant results. However, because of the complex nature of the relationship found between such factors and student's happiness, further research is necessary to study the mediating effects of each factor for happiness that can eventually help the students feel happier.

In terms of methods, our findings were limited to quantitative research. So, another study involving qualitative research in the future would help provide more in-depth findings about happiness.

Furthermore, this study contributed to the findings related to personal factors for college students, but lack factors at a macro perspective level, pertaining to the

community and the society as a whole.

Finally, although our research was focused on college students' happiness considering their developmental stages, other psychological elements such as their health, self-esteem and autonomy were not surveyed. Therefore, further studies involving such factors are necessary to accurately determine the factors affecting college students' happiness from all angles.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-016-9750-0>

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정 지 아(Jeaaah Jung)

[정회원]



- 2005년 8월 : KDI 국제대학원 경제정책학과(정책학 석사)
- 2011년 9월 : Univ. of Oxford 사회학과(사회학 박사)
- 2012년 3월 ~ 현재 : 동국대학교 다르마칼리지 강의교수

<관심분야>

대학생 교육, 고령화 사회, 다문화 사회

---

이 송 이(Song Yi Lee)

[정회원]



- 2001년 10월 : Columbia University Teachers College (Health&Behavior Studies)
- 2007년 8월 : 숙명여자대학교 대학원 아동복지학과 (문학박사)
- 2012년 3월 ~ 현재 : 동국대학교 다르마칼리지 강의초빙교수

<관심분야>

리더십, 에니어그램, 코칭, 아동청소년복지

---

심 태 은(Tae Eun Shim)

[정회원]



- 2003년 8월 : 동국대학교 교육대학원 교육행정전공 (교육학 석사)
- 2007년 8월 : 동국대학교 사범대학 교육학과 (교육학박사)
- 2007년 6월 ~ 현재 : 동국대학교 학생처 역량개발센터 연구교수

<관심분야>

리더십, 교수학습, 교육행정